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31 August 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR: DIRECTOR OF TRAINING

SUBJECT: Comments on Proposals for Career Corps

1. I note that your paper of 7 August 1951 has already been approved in principle, therefore, much of my thinking may be only of academic interest. I have assumed, however, that comments would not have been requested had there not still been room for further consideration of the problem.

2. In general, the objective of this paper which in its broadest sense is "let's have better people better trained" is an excellent one, but I am anxious that we not go overboard in our enthusiasm. In my opinion the foundation on which a training program must be based is a realization that foreign intelligence is a separate animal only because of the necessities of governmental organization. It is, in fact, an integral part of the public policy process and the educational background it requires is identical with that needed in the foreign policy sphere (cf. my memorandum to you of 14 February 1951).

3. There are several general comments which I feel I should make with regard to the 7 August proposal. I am fearful that the paper gives too much emphasis to academic training, which to me is at this time in the individual's development, less valuable than on-the-job experience and supplemental training. When academic training is necessary we should make a determined effort to rely on existing educational institutions rather than allowing the Agency to set up and run special courses. Careful attention should be given to each proposal for the use of taxpayers' money and only the essential expenditures should be recommended. My general impression of the proposal is that it is mechanistic and that the resulting complications would lead to unwarranted burdens on the substantive areas and the administrative machinery. One important requisite of any training scheme should be that it interfere as little as possible with the normal work of the Agency which, after all, it is intended to further. In this connection attention might be directed to providing after hours training courses on an optional basis. Bibliographies of recommended reading material of an unclassified nature might also be drawn up and the material kept in a lending library for the use of CIA employees.

4. With respect to professional trainees I might offer the following thought: (Isn't the job) in the foreseeable future (one of getting more highly-qualified applicants rather than one of selecting the best from many excellent ones? Since the Agency will continue to hire professional people other than the trainees, it seems a little artificial

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to go through such elaborate procedures in selecting this special group.) If special procedures are required, however, I would be inclined to question several of them. For example, I do not believe a young person straight out of college is in a position to decide on a career in CIA. He probably does not reach that position at least until after he has worked some time for the Agency. Further, (is it not undesirable and unrealistic to require that professional trainees must come from the upper one-fourth to one-tenth of their college classes?)

9

5. I have considerable doubt with respect to the basic training program. Does every professional trainee (and eventually every professional employee) really need 12 weeks of Russian language study? Although useful to some if they continue this study it would be totally useless to many professional employees of the Agency. The other half of the basic training course appears to be a detailed orientation which in part duplicates the bimonthly orientation series and insofar as it goes further, is probably not needed by the trainees at this stage of their career.

12

6. With respect to the career corps itself it is my understanding that the purpose in establishing such a corps is related only incidentally to such things as security benefits and employee morale. The real reason is so that CIA will be able to attract good people and keep them long enough to train them thoroughly in all aspects of intelligence so that there will be a reservoir of experienced able officers from which to fill the most responsible CIA positions.

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a. Query to what extent such a corps would attract the kind of people the Agency wants? The motivation of such people is probably along the lines of: a desire for government experience, an interest in international relations, a wish to help as best he can in a critical period, a desire to test his abilities and if he can deliver to advance rapidly. The existence of a "career corps" as such is not necessary to the realization of these aims provided there is sufficient opportunity for advancement and some assurance against getting stuck in a dull job.

b. As for creating a reservoir of experienced men, the point is, what experience do you want them to have? In my opinion you want men with the perspective gained from diverse experience in related fields not only outside CIA but outside intelligence and frequently outside the Government. We should concentrate on developing a man in his function and not in his agency. Because of the close relation between policy and intelligence the career concept must be broad enough to include both, and at the same time it must be flexible enough not to become stultifying or over-bureaucratic. One of the dangers of too narrow a career concept lies in the friction which tends to develop between the elite group and the other employees or between two or more career services.

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7. For these reasons I would suggest that, instead of setting up a career corps in the usual sense of the term, the Personnel and Training Offices should identify for themselves the outstanding people in the Agency from the point of view of their career development potential. They should consult with the offices of CIA as well as the other agencies in the national security-foreign affairs field and try to move these people every year or two by offering them good jobs and appropriate advancement. In this way an individual's experience could be rounded out and a maximum of flexibility and informality preserved in the system. These people should not be thought of collectively as a "career corps" but rather as promising individuals. *The method of selecting names for this list should be simplified and based mainly on performance in present and past jobs. In judging this performance I am again fearful of a mechanistic approach and would advocate placing major reliance on informal discussions with a man's supervisors and associates. *This would require no formal board but would be a constant mission of the offices of Training and Personnel and would be carried out informally.

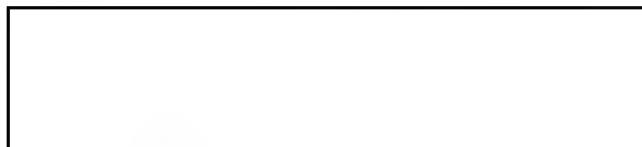
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8. In presenting whatever proposal is selected, I suggest that no attempt be made to illustrate any typical rotation plan since it is likely to be more misleading and controversial than it is worth. For instance in the 7 August charts, ought not specialists also be assigned to other agencies and generalists have tours abroad?

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9. In the document there is very little information on what is intended for the National Intelligence School. It is my belief that the advisability of establishing such a school is very much open to question. Insofar as its purpose is academic it would be duplicating the National War College and other institutions, and insofar as it is a cleared research, planning and estimating group, it would compete both for substance and personnel with the responsible government agencies.

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(JAMES Q. REBER
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